

Message Text

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S E C R E T LISBON 5685

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJ: PRESIDENT EANES ON THE CURRENT CRISIS

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH SACEUR OVER 28-30 JULY WEEKEND, PRESIDENT EANES OUTLINED HIS PLANS TO RESOLVE THE CURRENT GOVERNMENTAL CRISIS. THE SOURCE OF THE INFORMATION IS ARMA WHO WAS PRESENT AS TRANSLATOR FOR THE CONVERSATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE CAUSE OF THE CRISIS. THE PS, AND IN PARTICULAR PRIME MINISTER SOARES, FORCED THE ISSUE WHICH RESULTED IN THE CURRENT CRISIS,

BY BEING TOTALLY UNRESPONSIVE TO CDS POSITIONS--ESPECIALLY IN THE AREA

OF AGRARIAN REFORM, THE PS LEFT THE CDS NO CHOICE OTHER THAN TO RESIGN

FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

IN THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW, HE THEN HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO DISMISS THE

PRIME MINISTER AND HIS GOVERNMENT. HE SAID THAT TO ALLOW THE PS TO REMAIN IN POWER WOULD HAVE RESULTED IN THE PS SEEKING OUT THE PCP FOR SUPPORT IN THE ASSEMBLY. PRESIDENT EANES SAID A PS/PCP VOTING COALITION WOULD RESULT IN LEGISLATION UNACCEPTABLE TO THE PORTUGUESE

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PEOPLE. IN ADDITION, HE WOULD BECOME A "PRISONER OF THE PS."

2. THE PREFERRED SOLUTION. PRESIDENT EANES SAID HE WILL MAKE AN ATTEMPT TO FORM ANOTHER GOVERNMENT COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL PARTIES. HE IS AWARE OF THE EXTENSIVE DIFFICULTIES INVOLVED IN THIS AND IS NOT OPTIMISTIC CONCERNING THE SUCCESS OF HIS PLAN. IF HE CANNOT FORM SUCH A GOVERNMENT HE WILL

THEN TURN TO HIS SECOND CHOICE--A GOVERNMENT OF TECHNOCRATS OR "PERSONALITIES," WHICH HE BELIEVES WOULD HAVE A FAIR CHANCE OF LASTING UNTIL ELECTIONS IN 1980. THE THIRD CHOICE WOULD BE ELECTIONS, WHICH WOULD REQUIRE A NEW ELECTORAL LAW AND WOULD PROBABLY DELAY CONSIDERABLY A RETURN TO NORMALCY.

3. ARMA COMMENT: THE PRESIDENT WAS OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED, BUT HE IS DETERMINED TO FOLLOW LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURES TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS. A MARK OF HIS DEDICATION TO DEMOCRACY OCCURRED DURING LUNCH, WHEN HE SAID THAT HE BELIEVES NO MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO BE DICTATOR AND TO IMPOSE HIS WILL UPON THE PEOPLE. HE SAID THAT "ONLY THROUGH LEGISLATION PASSED BY (DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED) REPRESENTATIVES

OF THE PEOPLE COULD THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE BE PROPERLY REALIZED." MRS. EANES TOOK ISSUE WITH THE PRESIDENT, AND SAID QUITE FIRMLY THAT SHE THOUGHT SOME THINGS SHOULD BE IMPOSED UPON THE PEOPLE, FOR THEIR OWN GOOD, AT WHICH POINT A FAMILY DISAGREEMENT BECAME OBVIOUS. HOWEVER, THE PRESIDENT GOOD-NATUREDLY HELD HIS GROUND. IN A PRIVATE CONVERSATION HE MADE A SPECIAL POINT OF NOTING HIS PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP FOR PM SOARES, BUT STATED THAT "THE WELFARE OF THE COUNTRY MUST COME BEFORE FRIENDSHIP." IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT MOST PORTUGUESE OPERATE ON TWO RELATIONAL LEVELS. THUS, THE PRESIDENT MAY REGARD SOARES AS A FRIEND ON THE PERSONAL LEVEL AND, AT THE SAME TIME, HAVE AN EXTREMELY LOW REGARD FOR THE PM ON THE PROFESSIONAL LEVEL.

BLOOMFIELD

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED TO USNMR SHAPE.

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